

O Come, Let us sing to the Lord

Psalm 95 March 15, 2020

Fairfield Grace UMC

Psalm 95

- ¹ *O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*
- ² *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*
- ³ *For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.*
- ⁴ *In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.*
- ⁵ *The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.*
- ⁶ *O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!*
- ⁷ *For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.*
- O that today you would listen to his voice!*
- ⁸ *Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,*
- ⁹ *when your ancestors tested me,
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.*
- ¹⁰ *For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways."*
- ¹¹ *Therefore in my anger I swore,
"They shall not enter my rest."*

Introduction

Last Sunday we received a message based on Psalm 121. It was an opportunity to renew our faith in God, our Keeper and Shade and Watcher. Today, we receive Psalm 95 as the Word of God spoken to the people of God.

One afternoon last week, I took time alone at the Sanctuary and read Psalm 95 aloud more than several times. While reading it, I felt like I heard the Psalmist raising a joyful voice aloud and I felt like I saw His happy face full of thanksgiving. I also felt my heart were filled with a spirit of joy and thanksgiving. What a wonderful afternoon it was at the Sanctuary. Hallelujah!

We receive many invitations during our time in this world. Invitation to a wedding party, invitation to a sport event, invitation to a music concert, invitation to a lecture series, invitation to a bible study, etc. Among them, I am sure there must be one or two unforgettable and memorable invitations. Which one might be for you?

Mine is an invitation from White House in the year 1997, when I served at Jesse Lee UMC in Ridgefield, CT. Yes, from Bill Clinton, the 42nd president of America. "Come to White House, Kun Sam!" What an exciting occasion it was. I was too excited to sleep for several days. So was Kyong Hee. Making a long story short, I went to Washington DC and met with Al Gore, the 45th vice president of America with about 300 Asian American leaders in America. Catch me if you want to hear more about what happened to me at the White House.

Psalm 95 is an invitation to come and visit the Lord higher than any president or king in the world. Verse 3: The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

Hear this invitation. "O come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving! (vs 1&2) And also in verse 6, we hear the invitation, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!" Come! Let us come! Come to whom? Come to the Lord. It is a "Call to worship" psalm. It is the invitation to come to the presence of God and meet with God,

What a wonderful blessing it is to receive this invitation. It is an open invitation to all of us.

A question: Who is God whom we are invited to meet with? The Psalmist answers to this question.

1

God we worship is God the Creator. Verse 4 and 5 read, “In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.” We are God’s creation, as well. God has created you and me in His image and said, “It is very good” (Genesis 1:31)

Imagine you meet with your Creator. Isn’t it something wonderful and unforgettable? No wonder the Psalmist asks us to come with joy and thanksgiving. No wonder the Psalmist invited us to “sing” and “make a joyful noise” (vs 1 & 2) Worshipping is a heart-felt time full of gladness and joy.

2

Secondly, God we encounter at worship is God the Savior. Verse 1 reads, “Let’s make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.” The rock of our salvation is our God. God we worship is not only God the Creator, but also God the Savior.

Psalm 40:2 reads, “He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.” Isn’t this our faith statement?

God is the one who “so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16) God is the one who came to us and delivered us from the bondage of sin and death through Christ Jesus and enable us to live this life joyfully and thankfully.

Hallelujah!

Imagine again you meet face to face with God the Savior who graciously reached out to you in the pit and rescued you and helped you live this life freely and joyfully. Aren’t both joy and thanksgiving flowing over from your heart?

Yes, worshipping is a big party time. It is a time of celebration and thanksgiving over God and God's saving grace. It is a beautiful and wonderful time to praise and honor and give thanks to God the Savior.

Sometime ago, I saw a video showing the Sunday worship service in a church in Africa. People constantly shouted "Hallelujah! Amen!" with clapping hands while singing and listening to the message. What a vibrant and spirit-filled worshipping they had. The most impressive scene I still recall vividly is their offering time. Singing hymns with hands moving in the air, they danced to the altar table with their offerings. Their faces were full of happiness. Their hearts were with a spirit of joy and thanksgiving.

Worship is a big party time in the presence of the Lord who welcomes all, saying, "Once you were lost but now are found. You are my beloved sons and daughters. I love you. You are mine." Isn't it a great blessing and joy that we are invited to come and meet with God who welcomes us with a big open arms?

3

Verse 7 tells us also about the third face of the Lord we encounter at the worship. "He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." Who is our God? The Psalmist says in short "God is our Shepherd."

The Lord is not only our Creator and our Savior, but also our Shepherd who takes care of us. The Lord is not simply sitting up there and watching down with both arms crossed after creating and saving us. The Lord the Creator and the Savior is active in our midst. Emmanuel, God with us journey with us and talk with us and guide us and empower us and strengthen us and nurture us. God with us provide all things we need and take care of us always, day and night. Hallelujah!

Therefore, the Psalmist praises, saying, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pasture and leads me beside still waters." (Psalm 23:1-2)

Jesus also says, "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor

spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' Indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (Matthew 6:28-32)

God the Creator, God the Savior and God the Shepherd is our God to whom we are invited to come and sing and make a joyful noise with joy and thanksgiving.

Sunday is not the only day we do come to the presence of God. We can come to the presence of God at any time and at any day. One of my worshipping time is swimming time at LA Fitness. Under the water I sing and make a joyful noise. Yes, while swimming, I enjoy coming to the presence of God. How about you? Carve a block of time every day to worship in spirit and truth, and your life will be filled with joy and thanksgiving.

4

There is P.S. Verse 8 and 9 are the postscript of the invitation psalm, which read, "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work." "Do not harden your hearts!"

Exodus 17:1-7 Israelites camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for them to drink. So they quarreled with Moses, and complained against Moses, saying, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" Moses asked God and God provided water and Moses called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" The Postscript is "do not harden your hearts" like the people at Massah and Meribah.

We are in the wilderness. It is not an easy life to live in the wilderness. Life is difficult, indeed. We face many scary situations, whether we are ready or not. We encounter unexpected problems on and off. I am sure you agree with me that as

long as we are here in this wilderness, we will meet many trials and tribulations inevitably.

The Covid-10 pandemic we face these days is one of them. Literally the whole world is at a panic mode now. School are closed and all sports events canceled. We are strongly advised do social distancing and wash hands thoroughly as often as possible. Stock markets are shaking. So are we.

“Is the Lord among us or not?” “Where is God the Good Shepherd who promised us to take care of us?” Naturally we doubt God’s love and care. And we are tempted to whine and complain against God like the people at Massah and Meribah.

To us, the psalmist warns us not to harden your heart. What he says is not to lose faith in God, God the Shepherd who takes care of us. So Peter exhorts us, saying, “Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7) Paul commands us, saying, “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phillippians 4:6-7)

Closing

Hebrews 11:6 reads, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” We are a people of faith, trusting in God who always keeps us and takes care of. Let us walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

May we journey this wilderness life by faith all the way and at the end of the journey raise our voice aloud, saying boldly and joyfully, “I walk by faith, not by sight! Thanks be to God!” Amen. Amen. Amen.

P.S. Today, March 15 has been declared as a National Day of Prayer by President Trump. Let us join together in prayers, looking to God for strength and protection in this country and also in this world. We, people of faith “do not worry about anything” (Philippians 4:6) and “cast all our cares upon God, because God cares for us.” (1 Peter 5:7) Amen. Amen. Amen.